1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

634 of the size of the divisions and the formal linking of them together in subordination to the head of the State and of the heads of the intermediate divisions, and its authority being held in constant check by the democratic tendencies of the tribe. The word *pargana* is familiar in the west of the Central Provinces and in Berar as a unit of the Mussalman organization of the Deccan, and as more and more Indian officials were lent to Bastar from the Central Provinces it probably displaced gradually the less familiar terms *garh* and taluq. I deal below with the tribal organization of the [614] Hill Marias. Their clan-units were and are smaller than the conventional *garh* and often than the *barhon* or taluq; yet in the Abujhmar hills tract of the Antagarh tahsil these clan-units of land are now designated *parganas*. The modern list of *parganas* is considerably larger than those of Elliot and Glasfurd, who described all the Abujhmar country as one taluq or *pargana* named Marian; there are now nine Abujhmar *parganas* in Antagarh tahsil alone, besides others of obvious tribal origin below the hills, and there are twenty-nine *parganas* in all in Antagarh tahsil. These are shown in the map on page 33. It was pointed out in the 1911 Central Provinces Census Report, Part I, p. 239, that the Hill Marias of the Ahiri zamindari are similarly divided into (probably clan) units called *pattis*. The *parganas* of modern Bastar include some obvious former *garhs*, some obvious *barhons* (e.g. Baragaon *pargana* in Antagarh), and some obvious old tribal clan-units, while some have been created in my time; and the word *pargana* is now used of any sub-division of a tahsil or zamindari in which villages are grouped under a group headman or '*pargana majhi*'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

and many a marriage arises from the first meeting of lad and girl in these dances.

The land, as has been seen, is the land of the clan-god (if not even, in some sense, the clan-god himself). It is natural, therefore, that before any of these festivals are held in the individual villages of the clan the main ceremony for the whole clan should take place before the clan-god, either in or near the parish where his permanent hut-temple is situated. When the new grain of the crop concerned has been garnered, the *kasyeq-gaita* of each village sends word to the *pen-waddai* or clan-priest. The clan-priest consults the clan-god personally if himself a medium, or else through a medium, and announces a date for the celebration before the clan-god. On the night before leaving their village to attend the celebration, the *kasyeq-gaita* and all the men who are to go with him next day observe sexual continence, and sleep in the dormitory. The *kasyeq-gaita* is fed that night on fish, at the expense of the village, in some clan-areas. In a few villages a separate *bhum-gaita* exists, whose sole function seems to be to lead the villagers in visits of this kind to the clan-god. Before dawn, each wife grinds about 4 lb. of the new grain for her husband to take to the clan-festival. No women may attend the new-eating ceremonies. Besides supplies of new grain, the *kasyeq-gaita* and men take on behalf of the whole village a cock or two (there is no rule as to the colour of the victim), and perhaps, when the village is large or prosperous, a young boar (*not* a gelded pig) or a barren sow.

The deputations from the various villages assemble at the *pen-rawar* or shrine of the clan-god. The god, which in form is always a framework of logs criss-crossed with bamboos and bedecked with peacock feathers, spirals of quills, brass bells and other simple finery, is then taken out of his hut by four men of the clan-priest's family or village, and borne to the traditional place of sacrifice, which may be near the shrine or even outside the main village of the clan, three or four miles from the shrine. There they set the god down on stones under a *saja* tree, and the four bearers have a ceremonial wash. Sometimes the clan-priest again, either himself if a medium, or through mediums, consults the wishes of the god, who always permits the festival to continue, but generally suggests that they should first offer worship to the Village Mother of the village where the assembly has gathered. All adjourn to her shrine, and there the *kasyeq-gaita* of the village places a grain or two of the new crop on the table-stone or cleft stick representing the Mother, cuts the throat of a small chicken, sprinkles its blood on the Mother, and throws it down, still alive, on the ground. All watch the chicken eagerly; if after a convulsive leap or two it falls dead on its back with its claws in the air, it is an excellent omen.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

541 Cock-fighting is the favourite pastime of the Bison-horn Marias, well-known venues being the weekly markets at Kuakonda, Paknar, Kukanar, Bastanar Ghat and near Karli, among several others. They tie iron knives to the cocks' legs. If the cocks break away, their owners pick them up and rub their hackles or spit into their beaks to get their blood up. The defeated cock always becomes the property of the victor's owner. On any market morning you can see scores of Bison-horn Marias walking to market with cocks tucked under their arms. Hill Marias do not themselves go in much for this pastime; only a few of them even stay to watch cock-fighting at Dhaurai market. Some of the Kutru Hill Marias attend cock-fighting every week at Oikal in the Ahiri zamindari of Chanda.

231 Goats are seldom kept by the Hill Marias, though at Nugur in the Indrawati valley the Parlio clan, despite the fact that its totem
● 614 **Goats** is the goat, kept goats for the Teli tradesmen who owned the village rice bins described on page 102; but they could not eat goat flesh or even take goat milk.

Among the Bison-horn Marias, many, including even those who belong to the goat phratry and goat clans, keep goats and use goat milk; but totemistic rules prohibit members of goat clans and phratry from eating goat flesh.

231 As has been seen, the Hill Marias are not rich in cattle, do not milk them or yoke them to carts or ploughs, and generally keep Rawat herdsmen to tend them. Nearly all eat beef whenever they can afford it. Bullock or cow sacrifice is almost an essential part of funeral ceremonies, and all present eat the meat. Dead cattle are divided up and eaten; at Kutru, Hill Marias ate all that remained of a cow killed by a family of man-eating tigers, though the mangled remains had been gnawed by hyaenas and jackals, and exposed to the sun for four or five days till full of flies and maggots. The headmen of the villages of Padalibhum, Tapalibhum, Behramar, Nurbhum and Sonpur Mar *parganas* frankly admitted that they liked eating beef when they could get it; at Handawada, on the other side of the hills, the headmen of the Dantewara Mar and Mangnar *pargana* villages asserted that they never eat dead cattle, and only eat the beef of sacrificed animals. There are practically no buffaloes in the Abujhmar hills.

Cattle and buffaloes

231 The Bison-horn Marias are great stock-raisers, both of cattle and buffaloes, and they export many head of cattle to Chanda and
439 Raipur, as well as over the Madras border; in fact the land revenue is often paid out of the price received for cattle, and one of their favourite grievances is the cattle export duty of a rupee or two
231 imposed by the State. They use cattle for ploughing and are

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

or with Dorla neighbours. The clearest sign these retain of their Hill Maria origin is the retention of separate clan-areas, clan-gods and *modul-maddai* clan-priests for each large clan (*pari* or *hatta*) or pair or trio of closely related clans, as distinct from the Bison-horn Maria institution of one *pen* or clan-god for each of the five groups of clans or phratries (*tarr* or *kutmam*) and every clan (*hatta*) included in it, without any fixed phratry-area. On the other hand, each village in the true Bison-horn tracts is said to be the *bhum* of the clan (*hatta*) of the *perma* who originally founded it, and, as it is the *bhum* of his clan, he alone can officiate for the village at the ceremonies and sacrifices before the Village Mother, the Dongar Deo, Kodo Deo, Bhu-deo and Bhu-Devi, and the other forms under which the Earth is worshipped at the different agricultural ceremonies.

The Bison-horn country is extensive and, compared to the Hill Maria country, well populated. The villages forming the *bhum* of even individual *hatta* clans may be miles apart, while a village that is the *bhum* of a clan in phratry A may be surrounded by villages that are the *bhum* of clans in phratries B, C, D and E for miles before there is another village of a clan of phratry A. Further, though a village may be the *bhum* of the *perma's* clan, he may easily have only a few other householders of his clan in the village, but several of other kindred and affine clans. At Aranpur, most members of the big and small Marvi, the Hemla and the Oyami clans, all of which are included in the Marvi phratry, did not know the name of the clan-god of their phratry, but suggested vaguely that his *pen-rawar* might be in the Abujhmar hills or in Padar-raj, their name for the plateau around Jagdalpur. Some knew that the god's name was Handa Kosa Pen, and a few said that his *pen-rawar* was at Killepal, nearly sixty miles away, where the great western road from Jagdalpur to Bhopalpatnam approaches the passes descending to the Dantewara valley. At Killepal, however, I had not been shown Handa Kosa Pen; the village is the *bhum* of the Kuhrami clan, which gives its name to the Kuhrami phratry, and the clan members stated that they had no *pen-rawar* of their clan at Killepal, but that Hermraj Pen, their god, was, they had heard, in some village near Orcha in the Abujhmar hills. It was often agreed that a Maria should visit his Pen or clan-god every year in Aghan or Pand month (November-December) and offer a pig or a cock to the god at this annual *pen-jatra* or festival of the *pen*. At Aranpur a few of the older men said that they had long ago visited the Marvi clan-god Handa Kosa Pen at Killepal in their youth, but in recent years no one seemed to have been near. It was agreed that certain social offences could only be expiated by a visit and penal offering to the clan-god.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

776 The elders of the villages can actually often give the names of each of the gods whom they say that each of the five Bison-horn 614 phratries worships: the Markami phratry worships Harma Pen; 615 the Kuhrami phratry give varying names for their god, Hermraj Pen, Perambhoi (the name applied by the Dorlas to their corresponding Perambhoi phratry) or Banian Muttai; the Kawasi phratry worships Babo Herma Pen; the Marvi phratry Handa Kosa Pen; and the Sodi phratry Tul-Muttai Pen, whose *pen-rawar* is at Kamkanar in the Gangalur *pargana* in Bijapur tahsil, where Sodi Harma the *modul-waddai*, was regarded as the headman of all the surrounding Bison-horn villages. But other names are also given, such as Hirangraj, Hingaraj and Belraj for the Kartami clan, Hirmaraj for the Kawasi, Sodi, Markami and Marvi clans, and Hing-hunga and Mundaraj for the Beko and Kalmu clans. I have used the word 'clan' advisedly, because in this list some gods are shared by clans belonging to different phratries; thus Hirmaraj is shared by the Markami and Kartami clans of the Markami phratry and by the Sodi and Marvi clans of the Sodi and Marvi phratries, while of the worshippers of Hing-hunga and Mundaraj the Beko clan belongs to the Kuhrami phratry and the Kalmu clan to the Markami. Use Modia Pen of Ghotpal is restricted to the Lekami clan of that and surrounding villages, which is now considered part of the Kuhrami phratry. Other local log-gods will be found in the heart of the Bison-horn country at such places as Dugeli; some may be the true *pen-rawars* of the phratries, but I have been unable to verify this.

614 The whole position is, it must be admitted, somewhat confused, but it would be wrong to expect to systematize it. The same 615 confusion will be found again over the totems of the phratries and 173 clans; there are two phratries with the tortoise as totem, and inside the same phratry will be found clans with totems of their own or the totem of other phratries, or no totem at all. The traditions of the Bison-horn Marias all point to their having descended southwards from the Abujhmar hills to colonize their present country, and the presence in their midst of ruined Hindu cities at Dantewara, Barsur, and Bhairamgarh, of traces of forgotten kingdoms at Tirathgarh and Kuakonda, and of isolated villages of Jhari Telangas descended from the subjects of early medieval Telugu kings, point to the truth of the traditions. We have seen how new clans are forming to-day on the southern fringes of the Abujhmar hills, and how the Bison-horn culture is gradually absorbing the southernmost Hill Maria clans, which have, however, not fitted themselves fully as yet into the five-phratry organization, but retain their own clan-gods. The five phratries are named after five principal clans,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the names of which recur not only among Murias in north Bastar, but also among all the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Possibly strong bodies of these clans were the original colonizers, and with the growth of population in their new surroundings have either thrown off sub-clans or absorbed clans newly descending from the hills or acquiring their culture. It is not surprising that settlers in the tracts farthest from their first settlement should find it difficult to worship at the original shrines of their *pen*, and should either forget them, or here and there make fresh log-gods for themselves, perhaps sharing them with other adjacent clans not necessarily of their own phratries, just as they have learnt, unlike the Hill Marias, to share with other brother-clans and wife-clans village lands which are the *bhum* of their own clan.

The cult of the *pen* log-god of the clan is thus, as may be expected, considerably weaker among the Bison-horn than among the Hill Marias. Often he is neglected almost entirely in the annual feasts, or vaguely associated with the Departed in the expressions *pen-hanal* or *dhuma-deo* used of the ancestors. Where there is a log-god, he tends to be regarded merely as one of the local godlings that are becoming as numerous among the Bison-horn Marias as among the Gonds of the Central Provinces. Where there is none, occasionally at festivals before the Village Mother or other manifestations of the Earth a stone or two may be set up in his name under a *saja* tree and receive its share of the sacrificial blood and libations. It is not surprising that, therefore, the *waddai* of the clan-god is more purely a medium among the Bison-horn Marias, and less of a clan-priest than he is among the Hill Marias, and that most Bison-horn villages have at least one *waddai* who may be possessed not only by the clan-god but by other godlings also; even when he is attached definitely to a log-god at a festival, he may be possessed by him and give oracle on his behalf, but the *perma* of the village is the principal celebrant, and the *waddai*, when not possessed, degenerates into a mere *mantram*-reciting assistant of the *perma*.

The Village Mother and other gods among the Bison-horn Marias

Often there is no hut-temple for any deity among the Bison-horn Marias except one for Danteshwari Mai or Maoli or Mata, whose cults have spread from the Hindu temple of Dantewara, and in time will reach every village of Bastar. The Earth cult, however, remains, as among the Hill Marias, the essential cult. Its chief form is thus the cult of the Village Mother, called Tallin Ochur in the Bison-horn dialect. For all the village ceremonies there is a fixed plot of land in a field belonging to the *perma* and known as the *bhum-jaga*, *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu*; *bhum-jaga*

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this 614 association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *uraskal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms. 775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orcha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

The future life

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

The only writers who seem to have touched on the social organization of the Bastar Marias before are Russell and Hiralal, who said (III, pp. 64-6) :— 114 614

Russell and Hiralal, on the social organization of the Bastar Marias

'The Gond rules of exogamy appear to preserve traces of the system found in Australia, by which the whole tribe is split into two or four main divisions, and every man in one or two of them must marry a woman in the other one or two. . . .

'Among the Gonds, however, the subdivision into small exogamous sects has been also carried out, and the class system, if the surmise that it once existed be correct, remains only in the form of a survival, prohibiting marriage between agnates, like an ordinary sept. In one part of Bastar all the septs of the Maria Gonds are divided into two great classes. There are ninety septs in A Class and sixty-nine in B Class, though the list may be incomplete. All the septs in A Class say that they are Bhaiband or Dadabhai to each other, that is in the relation of brothers, or cousins being the sons of brothers. No man of Class A can marry a woman of any sept in Class A. The septs of Class A stand in the relation of Mamabhai or Akomama to those of Class B. Mamabhai means a maternal uncle's son, and Akomama apparently signifies having the same maternal grandfather. Any man of a sept in Class A can marry any woman of a sept in Class B. It will thus be seen that the smaller septs seem to serve no purpose for regulating marriage, and are no more than family names. The tribe might just as well be divided into two great exogamous clans only. Marriage is prohibited between persons related only through males; but according to the exogamous arrangement there is no other prohibition, and a man could marry any maternal relative. Separate rules, however, prohibit his marriage with certain female relatives, and these will be given subsequently (ibid., p. 72). It is possible that the small septs may serve some purpose which has not been elicited, though the inquiry made by Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath[1] was most careful and painstaking.

'In another part of Bastar there were found to be five classes, and each class had a small number of septs in it. The people who supplied this information could not give the names of many septs. Thus Class A had six septs,[2] Class B five, Classes C and D one each, Class E four, and Class F two. A man could not marry a woman of any sept belonging to his own class. 114 615

'The Muria Gonds of Bastar have a few large exogamous septs or clans named in Hindi after animals, and each of these clans contains several subsepts with Gondi names. Thus the *Bakarawans* or Goat race contains the Garde, Kunjami, Karrami and Vadde septs. The *Kachhimwans* or Tortoise race has the Netami, Kawachi, Usendi and Tekami septs. The *Nagwans* or Cobra race includes the Maravi, Potari, Karanga, Nurethi, Dhurwa and others. Other exogamous races are the Sodi (or tiger), Behainsa (buffalo), Netam (dog in Gondi), Chamchidai (bat) and one or two more. In this case the exogamous clans with Hindi names would appear to be a late division, and have perhaps been adopted because the meaning of the old Gondi names had been forgotten, or the septs were too numerous to be remembered.'

As will be seen in this chapter, the part of Bastar where five 'classes' were found was presumably the Bison-horn country and its cultural extension, the Dorla country, where there are definitely five phratries each containing varying numbers of clans. The tract in which, according to Rai Bahadur Panda Baijnath's enquiry, the 114 618

[1] Diwan of Bastar for many years.

[2] Six classes, A to F, are given, though the text speaks of five, the actual number among both Bison-horn Marias and Dorlas. But so few 'septs' are mentioned, nineteen as compared to the fifty in my list of phratries, that the enquiry must have been incomplete.

[See cat. 116, p. 424. — Analyst]

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

There are uncle-nephew sambhar grazing there.' 539
When the Raja saw them the deer ran to the hill. 223
He flew the hawk to catch them.
But the hawk did not catch the sambhar and flew away.
Milo milo called the Raja, but its pubic hairs took no heed.
The Raja went home weeping and told his elder brother's wife
That his hawk had flown away.

'Give me food quickly, I will go to find it.'
The girl gave food, the Raja ate it quickly.
He slung his basket on his back and went to find his hawk.
He went calling *Milo milo*, but he found no trace.
The Raja wandered on from land to land.
He came to the realm of Jihgunji Raja,
And called *Milo milo*, but still there was no sign.

The daughters of Ispural were living there.
In their house they hid the hawk; they said, 'We have no news of it'.
The Raja said, 'Where is my hawk? I will give you a reward'.
'We know nothing of your hawk and we want no reward.
Let us go to play, brother, in the sea of sixteen streams.
Then we will tell you of your hawk, and then you will find it.'

They went to bathe in the sea and having bathed, returned.
'Choose now which of us you will take away.'
'I will take the youngest, Phulsundri Rani.'
Quickly they finished the marriage, and gave him back his hawk.
He took his hawk and Rani and brought them home with him.
His elder brother's wife came to greet him with a pot of water.
She greeted him with Johar, and thus they lived and ate.

X. Fishing

The Muria are not professional fishermen, a duty which normally falls upon 226
the Kuruk or Dhimar, but whenever they live near a river they naturally make
every effort to supplement their diet, and everywhere they catch the small fish
that live in tanks and flooded fields.

They do not know a great deal about fish, and apart from saying generally 825
that lightning is caused by the flashing of the scales of a great fish that leaps 821
into the air and the legends they tell about the bod fish, which is the totem 614●
of several clans, they have little folklore about them. They distinguish a
dozen types of fish, among them the *bodmin*, *sipa*, *dandai* or *kurangra*, *nâri*
(or *bâm*), *bota* (or *khoksi*), *dundum*, *luwo* (or *turu*) and *bâgum*.

The gall-bladder of the *bâgum* is regarded as an important remedy for snake- 278
bite, a belief which is shared even by educated Hindus and members of the
State Medical Service. The Muria extract the gall-bladder and preserve it by
filling it with the small kosra grain. They keep this carefully and when it is
needed, the grain, which has been thoroughly soaked in the bladder secretions,
is removed and put in water. When it is dissolved it is given to the patient
to drink.

The Muria fishing apparatus is of the usual type. They sometimes use a 227
hook and line suspended from a bamboo rod; the hook is baited with flies and 226

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

CHAPTER THREE

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

I. The Clan System

AN elaborate discussion of the clan system of the Muria would be out of place and not very profitable, for it is impossible to bring any kind of order out of the confusion into which that system has fallen in modern times. But some account of the clans and their rules must be given, for they are of real importance to the children in the ghotul and a breach of the clan-rules may merit not only the vengeance of the Departed but severe punishment from the leaders of the ghotul and of the tribe. The clans regulate the absorbing question of marriage and the still more absorbing relationships of chelik and motiari. Their distribution directs to some extent the annual dancing expeditions. The clan festivals are among the most exciting and colourful incidents in the ghotul's life.

I will therefore briefly outline the clan system—though it must be remembered that it is not really a system—and I will then give a few stories about the origin of these clans and finally an account of the rules and customs that are observed.

The clan system of the Muria is now greatly confused. In the old days it seems probable that the inhabited territory of north Bastar was divided up among the different clans of Maria and Muria, and each had its own particular *bhum* or clan area. In each *bhum* there was a spiritual capital called the *pen-ravar* or *pen-kara*. Here lived the clan-god or Anga with the clan-priest to tend him and mediate between him and his kinsmen. Here they came for the chief festivals of the Anga; here they brought their dead and erected their menhirs; here they gathered for the special panchayat that discussed offences against the clan laws.

Traces of this organization exist, but the increase of population, the occupation of vast new tracts of land, the scattering of the clansmen in all directions has destroyed the clear pattern of former days. Many Muria have never visited their *pen-ravar*, many are living in *bhum* that really belong to other clans, most clans have *bhum* rights in villages that are widely apart. There are no longer compact clan areas, and in every village—though each is regarded as the *bhum* of some special clan—there live members of several other clans.

It was this fact, of course, that made the ghotul, in its Muria form, possible. Among the Hill Maria, where the old one-clan-to-one-village system still survives,[1] girls are not allowed to share the dormitory with the boys because of the obvious danger of clan incest.

The Muria, then, preserve the old traditions but in a confused and disorderly way. Many clans have more than one *pen-ravar* and several gods. The Naitami clan, for example, has spiritual headquarters at Kharkagaon, Kabonga, Chingnar and Sirpur; the Poyami clan worships Samrath Dokara—an Anga—at Sirsi, as well as Budha Pen at Lanjora and Chingnar. The Dhurwa clan has a clan-god, Son Kuar, at Metawand and another, Budha Dokara—an Anga—at Kharkagaon. The Sori clan worships Budha Pen at Chingnar, Kara Hurra at Garanji and Lalit Kuar at Gorma.

In each case, however, there is one ancient *pen-ravar*, to which the more orthodox elders of the tribe go when they can and where they will have their

[1] See Grigson, *op. cit.*, pp. 236ff.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

614 menhirs erected. This belief in the clan-*bhum*, whether original or adopted as a result of immigration and settlement, is still sufficiently alive to excite serious quarrels. It was a dispute over the rights to a clan-*bhum* that began the deadly feud between the sorcerer Singlu and the people of Almer.[1] Most of the inhabitants of Almer belong to the Kando clan (which has its *pen-rawar* at Kharkagaon) and they consider that the place is Kando-*bhum* since they first settled there. But Singlu is a Karanga. One day he said to the Kando priest, 'Let me erect memorial stones in your village; then my ancestors will live here and will help me and my family'. But the priest pointed out that the headquarters of the Karanga clan was at Kokori. 'If you bring your ancestors to this village, our gods will be neglected,' he said and refused to give him any *bhum*.

There was a similar conflict at Bandopal. The *bhum* here also belongs to the Kando clan which has erected a number of menhirs. Members of the Gaude clan, which stands in the *akomāma* relationship to the Kando, demanded a share of the *bhum*, probably because it was more convenient for them than to go to Kharkagaon. After many quarrels and a long dispute, the Kando people agreed to let the Gaude clan erect its menhirs within their *bhum* territory, and they even made a Gaude Gaita assistant to the chief Kando Bhum-Gaita (priest of the soil). But many of the Kando clansmen objected to this and stopped erecting menhirs at Bandopal, going instead to Kharkagaon (where indeed they ought always to have gone). In the end the Gaude people decided to give up erecting menhirs at all because of the expense, and gave back the land to the Kando clan.

615 The clans fall roughly into five phratries, which are generally called by the Hindi word for 'race', *vans*. There is the Nagvans or Serpent Race, which includes a number of brother-clans, most of which have the cobra as their totem and cannot marry among themselves; the Kachhimvans or the Tortoise Race, the Bakravans or the Goat Race, the Baghvans or the Tiger Race and the Bodminkvans or the Fish Race.

All the clans within one phratry are *dādābhai*, or brothers, to one another, and all the members of each clan are *dādābhai* to each other. The word used to describe the relation of a clan into which you can marry your daughter is *akomāma*, a combination of the words *ako*, which means a man's mother's father, daughter's son and daughter's daughter (all of whom will belong to a different clan in a different phratry) and *māma*, which means a man's mother's brother, his father-in-law and his wife's brother's son (who will again, of course, be members of different clans).

[582 835] A chelik or motiari, therefore, who is seeking either amorous adventure or permanent domestic relationship, has to turn to members of the *akomāma* clans. Fortunately, owing to the wide distribution of the population, there are nearly always members of such clans in one's own ghotul or near at hand.

614 Before going on to describe the origin of the clans and the special rules that govern them, I will give in tabulated form a list of clans with their totems. It is not worth while adding to this an account of the *bhum* territory as this is too scattered and disorganized; the same is true of the clan-gods and *pen-rawar*.

[615] It will be noticed that in addition to the phratry totem each clan has its own totem which is sometimes different. The Sori clan has three different totems.

[1] See p. 204.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

614
615

CLAN	TOTEM	CLAN	TOTEM
	The Nag (Cobra) Phratry		
Buyi	Bullock	Maravi	Goat
Dhurwa	Goat	Kassi Maravi	Kassi tree
Duga	Cobra	Etikal Maravi	She-goat
Kalo	Cobra	Nei Nuroti	Dog
Karanga	Wild buffalo	Nuroti	Cobra
Kaudo	Goat and horse	Partabi	Goat
	The Kachhim (Tortoise) Phratry		
Kawachi	Tortoise	Parchapi	Tortoise
Komra	Tortoise	Poyami	Tortoise
Markami	Tortoise	Tekami	Tortoise
Naitami	Tortoise and dog		
	The Bakra (Goat) Phratry		
Gaude	Goat	Ori	Goat
Karhami	Goat	Uika	Kassi tree
Komra	Goat	Wadde	Goat and kassi tree
Kunjami	Goat		
	The Bagh (Tiger) Phratry		
Sori	Tiger, buffalo and bod fish		
Wadder	Buffalo		
	The Bodmink (Fish) Phratry		
Halami	Bod fish	Kuhrami	Kassi tree
Hurpundi	Bod fish	Kumoti	Kumot bird
Kachlami	Kassi tree	Usendi [1]	Usi bird

I have somewhat arbitrarily divided the clans into these five phratries, though we must not suppose that this is how the Muria usually thinks of them. In each area he is only concerned with the relatively small number of clans in his own neighbourhood. When Dhanuram, my Usendi assistant from north-west Narayanpur, went to Kondagaon Tahsil, the Kuhrami and other related clans did not recognize him as one of themselves, for they had never heard of the Usendi—which is a great clan of the Abujhmar and north-west Bastar.

[1] Russell and Hiralal put the Usendi clan in the Kachhimvans. Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 65.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

614 615 There are other clans which I have not been able to fit into the scheme of phratries—the Hurra clan with its clan-god Lingo Mudial at Semurgaon, the Karati with its *bhum* at Phunder, the Vetti which has the lizard as its totem and the Kodovetti which has the mongoose. These, of course, fit into the scheme of *akomāma* and *dādābhai* relationships of their own neighbourhood.

There are not many songs about the clans. I give one Jhoria Pata from Sirpuri.

Those who kindle fire in the field
are boys of the Uika clan.
How strong the Uika boys are!
Those who make a hearth with brinjals from the Panara's house are boys of the Maravi clan.
Those who sit on a gate and call it a horse are boys of the Maravi clan.
How strong the Maravi boys are!
Those who build a hearth of pig's droppings are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who sit to clean their teeth with a twig are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!
Those who blow the buffalo horn are boys of the Halami clan.
Those who throw fine rice on the road are boys of the Halami clan.
How strong the Halami boys are!

614 539 [411 531]

FIG. 15 Decorated Muria knife
Length 1' 5"

II. THE ORIGIN OF THE CLANS

614 Many of the clans derive their origin from some historic journey in the course of which a river had to be crossed. Others have local and special reasons for their origin.

This legend of crossing a river is known throughout central India. Many Gond, Baiga and Agaria trace their clans and the attachment of those clans to certain totems from this.[1] In Muriā mythology we are sometimes told

[1] Compare, for such tales in the Central Provinces alone, Russell and Hiralal, *op. cit.*, Vol. III pp. 61ff.; Grigson, *op. cit.*, p. 241; C. G. C. Trench, *Grammar of Gondi* (Madras, 1919), Vol. II: pp. 8ff.; Elwin, *The Agaria*, p. 75; M. P. Buradkar, 'Totemism among the Gonds', *Man in India*, Vol. XX (1940), pp. 120 and 277ff.; *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. I, Part III B, p. 77 (the Gond emigrating from Phuljhar cross the Gondki river in flood).

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

that this first great journey was the coming of Lingo with his brothers to the earth. This is the Alor version of the tale. 614

At the beginning of the world, after Lingo and his brothers had put the earth in order, heaping up a mountain here and hollowing out a river there, the earth began to weep crying, 'There is no one to serve or worship me'. But Lingo and his brothers said, 'Do not distress yourself, we will go to find a priest for you'. 614 539

Then Lingo took his brothers to Lanjhi and Dhamda. In Lanjhi Raja Naitam was living. He had seven sons and seven daughters. Lingo came to them and said, 'The earth is ready in the Middle World and we have come to take you there'. When they heard that, Raja Naitam and Raja Markam with their sons and daughters and their subjects, Sori, Kawachi, Poyami, Kuhrami and Kaudo, set out with Lingo and his brothers to the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had many possessions and they travelled more slowly, lagging behind the others.

After a time they came to a great river. Lingo and his brothers said to themselves, 'We are gods and can cross without difficulty, but how are these human beings to get over?' On the bank tall grass was growing and Lingo and his brothers made it into a rope and stretched it across the river. The subjects clung to the rope and got across, but they were jealous of the two Rajas who were coming behind and, once they were safely on the far bank, they cut the rope. Then Raja Markam and Raja Naitam not knowing that the grass was cut began to cross, but under their weight the rope went down and they sank up to their necks in the middle of the river and stood there weeping. The *daudai* fish, who is the king of all the creatures that live in water, heard the sound and sent a tortoise to save them, and since then the Markami and Naitami honour the tortoise as their god.

At last the whole party reached the Middle World. Raja Naitam and Raja Markam had brought their cattle with them, and they offered a black calf to Mother Earth and pleased her greatly. These are the old priests of the Earth. All the gods have come from Lanjhi-Dhamda except Danteshwari and Maoli, who came from Warangal.

There are endless versions of this tale. In Lanjora a member of the Naitami clan said that,

At the beginning of the world a brother and sister on their way to a certain village came to a great river. The sister went ahead and reached the other side. Then a flood came down and the boy was left behind. Each wept on opposite sides of the stream. Then came a tortoise and asked the boy why he was weeping. When he told his story, it took him on its back and began to swim across. Half way across, the tortoise sank, but as the boy was drowning a dog came from the far bank where the sister was standing and swam out to him. He caught the dog's tail and was dragged to safety.

This story obviously attempts to explain how it is that the Naitami clan, which is named after the dog (*nai* is the Gondi word for dog) yet honours the tortoise as its totem. Many Naitami, however, have a special reverence for the dog as well.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

539
614

Another very common variation of the legend is that told by the Hirko clan:

> When the first twelve brothers came to Bastar from Warangal, they came to a great river and decided to have their midday meal before crossing. Six of the brothers said, 'The river may flood; let us eat our food quickly' and they mixed their rice with water, ate it and went ahead. The other six mixed ghee in the rice instead of water and it took a long time to cook. As they were waiting for it to be ready the river came down in flood and, unable to cross, they sat on the bank and wept. Then came a tortoise and asked them what was the matter. When they told their story, the tortoise said, 'Will you worship me and never eat my people if I take you over?' They swore to do so and the tortoise carried them across on its back, and ever since these six brothers honour it as Bara Pen. In Dongar, Bara Pen used to go from place to place in the form of a tortoise.

Other clans are connected with the bod fish.[1] Members of the Halami clan at Gorma described how,

> There was a great tank in the jungle and below it was a village. The people of that village thought that if the banks were to break they would all be drowned and they decided to make a channel to carry the water away in another direction. Hearing this Kana Pen came to the place and camped below the tank. 'I will break the bank,' he said to himself. By his magic he put all the Muria to sleep and then broke the banks and the water poured out. Kana Pen saved himself by clinging to the root of a tree, but as the water ponred over him the bod fish came, angry and saying, 'I will eat one of the eyes of whoever has dried up my tank'. It caught Kana Pen and ate one of his eyes and since then Kana Pen has been one-eyed. Since that day we worship him and with him we worship the bod fish in order to stop it eating his other eye.

Another clan which in certain places honours the bod fish is the Sori. At Masora members of this clan had a slightly different version of the story. Here they regarded Kana Bod as a man.

> The people of the village went to a nearby river to make a bridge. They had iron spades, but Kana made a wooden one. When the others began to dig out the stones, Kana sat idly on the bank. The others got tired, but the bridge was not yet ready and they shouted to Kana, 'Now come and work yourself'. So he took his wooden spade and began to dig. As they watched him the others said to themselves, 'If we kill this man and throw him in the river, then the bridge will soon be ready'. When he heard them Kana jumped into the river and was carried away by the water. A great fish caught him and ate one eye. After that Kana Bod turned into a fish and we have worshipped him as a god.

The Sori clan is actually the tiger clan (*sori* means tiger in Gondi), but it is connected with bees and buffaloes as well as with tigers and bod fish. In

[1] The bod fish is regarded as specially sluggish in Chhattisgarh and is often compared to a drunken Kalar. See R. B. Hiralal, 'Why Kawat Women are Black', *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. LX (1931), p. 35.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

Karkhedra, a member of this clan described how his ancestors were born from a tigress: 539 614

> Two children were born: one brother was a tiger, one was a human being. When the boy grew up, one day he was going to the fields with eleven other men. A tiger came by and asked each in turn, 'Who are you?' Each of them, knowing that the tiger would not kill its own child, said, 'I am Sori' and it spared them. When it came to the real Sori boy it was angry and said, 'You can't all be Sori' and ate him. Ever since we have been angry with the tiger that betrayed us, and when a tiger is killed we put an egg and a pice in its mouth.

In Sidhawand I recorded yet another story of the origin of the Sori clan.

> The twelve Sori brothers went to get honey in the forest. The tree where bees lived stood beside a stream and the shadow of the hive could be seen in the water. Eleven of the brothers seeing the shadow in the water tried to reach it, but they fell in and were drowned. The twelfth brother looked up and saw the hive; so he climbed the tree and got the honey. In this way the Sori clan came into being.

In Cherfbera the Maravi clan trace their origin to an incident in Chingnar.

> In Chingnar a Marar dug a well but could not reach water. Presently a tortoise came out of the well and everyone said, 'It must be a god'. Then the tortoise came to the Marar in a dream saying, 'I am Bara Pen, I will give you water in your well and a son to your wife if you worship me'. The next day the Marar took a goat to offer to the tortoise but it refused the sacrifice saying, 'I must have a cow'. This the Marar refused to give. So the tortoise said, 'I will stay no more with you, I will go to the Muria'. The Muria gave the tortoise a cow and thus became Maravi (for Bara Pen came to them from the house of the Marar), but because the Marar offered a goat, the Maravi do not eat goat.

Other stories throw light on the way in which some clans possibly did originate—through dreams and the divisions of families as well as by migration. In Sisti village, the Naitami told us that,

> Long ago an old Muria widow lived with her son. When the boy was old enough he was married, but the next day he died and they broke the girl's bangles. The girl and her mother-in-law were weeping bitterly, but at last the husband came to the girl in a dream saying, 'Worship me as Dulha Deo, and I will go on being your husband'. The next day she made offerings to Dulha Deo and from that time he used to come daily to her by night till a son was conceived and born. The elders of the village came to the girl and asked whose child it was. 'I have been to no one,' said the girl, 'It is the child of Dulha Deo.' They were all laughing at her when the dead boy came out of the house and they realized that it really was Dulha Deo who had given the child. So we Naitami call ourselves *rândihe nene* (born of a widow) and our women do not wear bangles.

From the same place I recorded a story explaining why the Naitami and the Poyami, though both having the tortoise as their totem and both being descended from the same parents, can yet intermarry in some villages:

> During a great famine, a Poyami was dying of hunger and went to a Naitami's house to beg for food. The Naitami said, 'There is no food

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

here, I can give you nothing'. But the Poyami said, 'At least keep my daughter to work in your house and give me a little food'. So the Naitami fed him and kept the daughter in payment. When the time came for redeeming the girl the Poyami had no money, so the Naitami kept the girl and married her. From that girl there was born a daughter who was Naitami and from her brother there was a son who was Poyami. These two married, for the girl was *dudh-bahini* to the boy.

III. Clan Rules

Every clan has its own distinctive regulations based often on some incident in the story of its origin, often, too, on something that has happened, probably really happened, to a member of the clan.

The first rule is, of course, the obvious one; that no one may marry within the clan or a member of a clan that is related as *dādābhai*. Marriages can only take place between clans that stand in the *akomāma* relationship to one another.

The second rule is that members of a clan must avoid injury to the totem animal, tree or plant, must not eat it, and must usually give it some special honour or worship. In many clans, when the totem animal dies, the members observe mourning just as they would if a human being of their own clan had died.

Thirdly, there are a number of special rules such as that forbidding the members of the Naitami clan to wear bangles.

Among the food rules, some are clear enough. None of the members of the Bakravans or Goat phratry may eat goat's meat. We have seen that there is an added reason for this among the Maravi because, in the story of their origin, the Marar from whose house the tortoise emigrated offered it a goat. When a goat dies the Maravi perform funerary rites for it; they will not even touch the water from which a goat has drunk. This rule is taken very seriously. Twenty years ago in Palari one Bhaira Maravi ate goat's flesh by mistake and died of it, his throat swelling and choking him. Raghunath Maravi also ate it by accident, but he sacrificed a pig to Mati Pen and a buffalo to Bara Pen and was saved, though his brother died. In Kondagaon a man of the Partabi sept ate a goat and was very ill. He was excommunicated and only readmitted to the tribe after paying a heavy fine.

The members of the Kachhimvans or Tortoise phratry avoid eating the tortoise and worship it. The Naitami clan in addition to honouring the tortoise revere the dog, which they regard as their elder brother. Members of the Sori or Tiger phratry, however, have a buffalo totem, since members of the clan consider that they were betrayed by the tiger who ate the original member of their clan. But they still refuse to kill a tiger, and when one is killed they perform funerary rites for it.

Members of the Nagvans or Serpent phratry are supposed to be immune to the bite of the cobra, but some of the members of this phratry also honour other animals. For example, the Karanga has the wild buffalo as its totem and the Nei Nuroti has the dog.

Members of the Usendi clan which, being a Hill Maria clan, does not fit easily into any of the Muria phratries, do not eat the *usi* bird. The Kaudo sept has to avoid the horse: its members may not ride a horse or touch it. If a horse is tied in front of a Kaudo house, it goes mad or dies. The Komra sept never cut down a kassi tree, nor do they eat its leaves as vegetables. They must not cook roti with oil, and at the New Eating ceremonies they

614 must not themselves cook at all but must get their food from others. If they do cook in their houses a tiger will kill their cattle.

A similar rule applies to members of the Poyami clan, who have been forbidden by their clan-god to cook in their own houses at Diwali. Once an old man broke the rule and his cattle died. The Poyami sept also must not eat carrion, though a cadet branch, the Busar Poyami, may. Long ago a Poyami ate a dead cock and died of it. Randa Pen, who is the same as Dulha Deo, has forbidden it. The Poyami are so particular about this avoidance of carrion that they must not use even grain or fruit that has fallen of its own accord to the ground or they will lose their eyesight; if a gourd falls down or if rice falls from a basket or bin, they must not use it but must give it away to someone else. The grandfather of the Pujari of Karanji broke this rule and was supernaturally blinded as a punishment.

The Kuhrami clan must not eat cocks and they are said to place a small image of a cock on the forehead of a bridegroom at a marriage.

I have already noted the fact that Naitami women cannot wear bangles. If they do, it is believed that a snake will wind round the wrist or that the arm will swell until the bangle is broken, and both husband and wife will die. So when members of this sept go to perform the betrothal ceremony they do not give bangles, as is usual, to the future bride. The Naitami frequently marry the Poyami, and after a Poyami girl is engaged to a Naitami boy she also gives up wearing bangles even before she is married.

This custom derives from the story that has already been given. It was said in Silati that many years ago when a boy and girl were shut up together in the house on the last night of their wedding and the boy took his wife to bed for the first time, a snake coiled itself round her wrist. The boy hastily promised to break the bangles in its honour and the snake went away.

A wife, of course, changes her clan to that of her husband after marriage and even, in many cases, after betrothal. Once the ring-cowrie has been placed in the Pot of the Departed of her father's house,[1] a girl is regarded as having made compensation to her own ancestors for her desertion of their clan, and is now a member of her husband's clan. Sometimes she even goes for festivals, especially those of the clan-god, to her future husband's house instead of remaining with her own family. She is now free to eat her old totem animal and generally some opportunity is taken after the marriage to enable her to do this. Before she does so a few drops of liquor or a coconut are offered to her own ancestors to ensure that they will not be offended.

Adoption is uncommon among the Muria, but it exists. Where a baby is adopted from a family belonging to another clan, the child's clan and totem is changed—unless it is a sister's son. There is a small ceremony for the changing of the clan: offerings are made to the clan-god and the Departed and a feast of pork and liquor is given to the village. After this the child takes his new father's clan and ancestors as his own.

IV. The Family

582 Such, very briefly, is the system into which the chelik and motiari must adjust their lives. But can a chelik marry any girl of the tribe provided she belongs to an *akomāma* clan? As in the rest of India, the Muria regard certain relations as standing in a forbidden relationship; with others there is the

[1] See p. 127.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

ORGANIZATION OF THE TRIBE

607

Dewar: O Ange, the gruel is made of broken rice.
Ange: O my Dewar, where are you going today?
Dewar: Today I am not going anywhere
For I have to load my bullocks.
Tomorrow I go to another land to trade.
Ange: I too will go with you to drive the laden bullocks.
Dewar: Don't come with me, for all know how we stand to one another.
Those who do not know us will call us brother and sister.
And when they call us that we shall be ashamed.

The relations between *samdhi* and *samdhin* are generally of an amiable, coarse and humorous nature. For men this is a drinking rather than a joking relationship, and all their lives whenever they meet they regard it as an excuse for a bottle. The women, specially as they get older, are more obscene in their conversation. They catch hold of each other's breasts, stick feathers into the private parts and exchange the coarsest jokes. 602 522 [831]

The place where this joking and fun most commonly occurs is at a marriage. 'There is no purdah in a house of marriage.' Everybody feels free to fool about; no one is going to be offended; everyone is slightly drunk.

V. Summary

The clan and the family dominate and control Muria social life. Nothing reveals more clearly the extent of this domination than the fact that out of 2000 marriages examined no fewer than 1799 were of the cross-cousin type and, in spite of every temptation to the contrary, 1884 out of 2000 boys married according to their parents' wishes. This could only happen in a society which had a strong regard for its own organization and laws. 614 582

The clan system retains its vitality both as an exogamous unit and as a means of organizing its members round the clan-god and the memory of the Departed. Clan festivals remain great and notable occasions. The clan system, as a study of marriage statistics will show, continues to regulate betrothal and marriage. The *samdhi* relationship, as may be seen in every song and story, continues to be of the first importance. Clan traditions still regulate funerary rites and memorial customs. Totemism is less important, but is still far from moribund. The whole complex of ideas and customs is greatly confused, but the very confusion is perhaps a sign of its vitality.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

Such is Hatum Pen which may be seen in the form of wooden pillars with large rounded heads on the road near Bishrampuri and Pendrawand. The origin of this god is traced to a famous old Muria, whose very name the people have forgotten, who became a ghost and troubled the people. After many of them had fallen ill he came in a dream and said, 'Put up a pillar in my honour, and I will help you instead of harming you'. The Muria therefore put up these pillars near the bazaars (*hāt*), and thus they got their name.

On the roadside near Sidhawand is the god Bhurkal or Bhurkabatti who is represented by a stone which has a mark on the top something like a tiger's pug. Passers-by drop a leaf upon it in salutation. When a tiger is killed, members of the Sori clan go there and make offerings.

In Bandopal I saw Muiya Pen, which is simply a big cow-tail to which offerings are sometimes made for the protection of the cattle.

Round Kondagaon the Muria have begun to imitate their Halba neighbours by making offerings to Tija Deo. He is worshipped by an elaborate ceremony. A winnowing fan is placed upside down over a pot full of rice. Above this is a bow and arrow. In the evening one of the women of the house sits on a stool near the pot and tries to play on the bow with the arrow as if it were a musical instrument. She plucks the bow-string rapidly with her fingers, singing all the time.

This begins on the first day of the Hareli festival. On this day also, a leaf-cup is filled with earth, and various seeds such as rice, maize, gram, mandia are sown in it and it is sprinkled with a mixture of water and turmeric. On the third day of the festival the Muria make a bamboo cage, put a bunch of flowers inside and cover it with a new cloth. They sing all night and the following morning take the cage, the pot above which the bow and arrow had been placed and the leaf-cup in which the grains have now sprouted, to the river. They distribute the shoots of grain and offer coconuts to Bhimul, Lingo and other deities.

In Alor there is a hill called Pila Babu Dongri. 'Here Bhairam Deo, whose wife is Linga Siri, had a son Pila Babu. He made a swing for his boy on which he still rocks him to and fro.' In Alor and Bailgaon, therefore, the Muria never sleep on cots, nor do they swing babies in the little bamboo baskets in which they usually keep them. Once a child died in a swing at Alor and when the people asked the Siraha why, he answered, 'I am Pila Babu and in my presence none may swing or sleep on a cot'. They say that once a Binjhwar came from the Raipur District selling medicines and tied a swing to a mango tree near the house of Kuhrami Tirbiji, a Muria of Alor. After he had swung the swing to and fro a few times no fewer than six people died, and the Gaita declared that it was due to the anger of Pila Babu at being insulted.

There is no limit to such deities and such stories. Nearly every village has its own special god who has to be kept quiet by offerings, for unhappily no village is free of tragedy and when tragedy visits a place, the hand of some god is usually suspected.

IV. The Clan-God

We have already seen how in the old days every clan had its own peculiar *bhum* or territory, over which presided a clan-god who lived in the spiritual capital of the *bhum*, the Pen-rawar. This god is known as the Anga, the Pen or the Pat Deo.[1]

[1] A fuller account, relating Muria and Bison-horn Maria beliefs, will be found in my article 'Folklore of the Bastar Clan-Gods', *Man*, Vol. XLIII, pp. 97ff. W. V. Grigson reminds me that exactly similar gods are made and worshipped by the Halba, both in Bastar and the Drug and Chanda Districts, and by the Jhari Telenga.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

MURIA RELIGION

617 776 Today when the process of god-making in Bastar has burst all bounds, when the clans have been scattered, when new clans have come into existence and old clans divided, there is no longer the neat and tidy arrangement of former days. But there is still a deep attachment to the idea of the clan-territory and the clan-god. Every clan still has its spiritual headquarters, still has the clan-god who is regularly worshipped at the great festivals, still maintains a clan-priest (Pen-Dhurwa or Pen-Waddai) to perform that worship, and still in many cases takes its dead to mingle with the clan-ancestors. What has happened in modern times is that each clan may have several places whither it will go for worship or for the disposal of its dead, and this has confused the picture. But the clan-gods are still of great authority.

778 776 614 The Anga is in form and character unique among the aboriginal gods of India. In form it is an arrangement of three parallel poles of saja,[1] bel or ira wood, over which are tied by siari rope cross-pieces of bamboo or saja. The central pole is the actual god, the two side-poles being simply intended to enable his two or four bearers to raise him and carry him about. This central pole has a curious head called *koko* which resembles that of a snake or bird. At the junctions of the logs and cross-bars there are tufts of peacock feathers. Silver ornaments, symbols of the sun and moon and sometimes plain rupees, are nailed to the ends of the poles. Bands of silver may be hammered round them. Bells are hung round the 'neck'. Sometimes the Anga is two-headed: husband and wife live together. The clan-god of the Maravi at Phunder, who is called Karati Dokara, has two heads each with a hooded cobra nailed to it. So too the Anga at Bhanpuri, Son Kuar, is two-headed. Sometimes the Anga's wife is made in the form of a pole and placed upon him.

The Anga is kept in a special shrine apart from the other gods and is either suspended by ropes from the roof or placed on a bamboo support a couple of feet above the ground. When it is taken abroad or goes to live for a time in someone's house, a special stand must be made for it. The Anga usually has a *jiwa* or soul. At Phunder it is a piece of iron carefully preserved under the sacrificial stone in front of the shrine. In Semurgaon the soul of Lingo is a bit of iron wrapped in a grass bundle and hung above its body. Sometimes the soul goes abroad of its own accord and has to be replaced with appropriate offerings. At Chingnar, the soul of Son Kuar goes to hunt at night and in the morning feathers are found scattered about his shrine.

When in use, the Anga is kept sometimes very casually. In Dongrigura, I saw one hanging from the roof in a corner of the granary belonging to the Gaita. At Magbeda, it was lying crookedly in a broken-down hut in the Gaita's garden. The two-headed Anga, Son Kuar-Maoli, at Bhanpuri, is kept in the Gaita's *bari*-enclosure in a little shed. At Karanji the Naitami Anga, Pila Kuar, is kept in the Gaita's house.

The Anga often has one or more attendants in the form of wooden horses slung from the roof beside it. These horses are taken out at the clan festivals and the mediums dance wildly with them. There are two horses attending the Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon. The shrines may be adorned with the skulls of animals killed in the latest ceremonial hunt, with decorated poles or sticks used by the god at festivals, and with symbols of the god's children.

For the Anga is very like a human being. It marries and has children. It has relations both inside and outside the clan. Some of the older gods have very large families. Lingo Pen's brothers, nephews and other relatives are enshrined and worshipped all over the north of the State. The process of

[1] The famous Anga of Lingo at Semurgaon is made of saja, for it was this tree he kicked as he escaped unhurt from his great ordeal.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

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multiplication is accelerated by the Anga's polygamous habits. The son of an Anga may itself be an Anga, or it may take the form of a Gutal—a long pole with a bunch of peacock feathers at the top, or a Lath—a decorated flag attached to a bamboo staff.

The manufacture of an Anga is an elaborate and dangerous business. It is a necessary one because new gods are born from time to time, and the old gods wear out. There is a general idea that an Anga 'dies' every three or four generations. When this happens it leaves its mortal frame and troubles its clansmen until they make it a new one. Sometimes it expresses its will by burning down its shrine—when this happens everything is consumed, but the god itself is unharmed. Sometimes it attacks the village cattle in the form of a tiger. Sometimes it plagues the Gaita with appalling dreams.

The actual making of the god is unusual and interesting; it reveals the logical and straightforward working of the Muria mind. Once it is admitted that the Anga is a sort of person with like passions to ourselves, the rest follows. I will give some typical accounts from villages in the north of the State.

In Kokori the clan-priest told me that when an Anga gets very old and tired, it is taken to a river and 'cooled' by being thrown into the water. The clan-priest prays to the Yer Kanyang, 'Now it is in your charge, you must care for it'. After a time the old Anga sends a dream to the priest and the villagers decide to make a new one. They have to go to another priest of a clan which stands in a marriageable relationship to the Anga's clan and he takes them to a suitable tree. He embraces it, and if his hands meet round the trunk it is a good omen, and an engagement is celebrated.

The following year in the month of Magh they again go to the same priest who offers rice to the tree and says, 'Now we are going to take you away'. He goes round it with a thread, winding it seven times, and then cuts it down. As he is cutting it, he gives the tree liquor from time to time 'in case it should get tired'. They take the wood home, and induce some old man to make the Anga. When it is ready they take it to the river and make offerings to the Yer Kanyang. Every Anga has an umbilical stump with a cord attached and the father's sister of the clan-priest must cut this cord and throw it into the water. Then they bathe the god to purify it after the cutting of the cord. At last it is taken to its temple and a young bull is sacrificed.

Another interesting account comes from Korenda, where the Anga of Budha Dokara and Dokari Deo, the clan-gods of the Partabi and Wadde clans in that area, are made every few generations. The preliminary rites are performed as elsewhere, but later, just before the visiting clan come to fetch the wood for their Anga, the Gaita of the Bhatgaon *bhum* (whence the wood must be taken) goes to the path by which they will come and buries seven eggs at intervals along it.

After the visitors have cut and dressed the wood, and are preparing to go home, they whistle loudly. The Gaita and villagers of Bhatgaon are waiting for the signal, and at once come out to catch them in a sort of game of hide-and-seek. The visitors dash for home, but if one of them is unlucky enough to break one of the buried eggs, it turns into a tiger which destroys their cattle.

When the Korenda people get home, they cut the tree into two, the upper half to be used for Budha Dokara and the lower for Dokari Deo. A special enclosure is made near the shrine of the now exhausted clan-god, and the wood is left there until someone comes forward who is willing to make the Anga. There is no limit to the interval; it may last any time from a few weeks to several years. When one or two very old men, who are not likely

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in any case to live much longer, come forward for the work, they set them to make the frames. When they are ready they put an egg on each Anga and make the old men sit 'to hatch them'. They have to sit there until their *jiwa* (souls) pass from their bodies into the gods. They know when this happens because the Anga begin to shake and tremble of their own accord. Directly this happens, the members of both clans bring a cow or bull and sacrifice it. The old men climb down from their perches and the Gaita breaks the eggs before the gods.

Both Anga now start swinging and are carried on the shoulders of four Siraha-mediums. After the usual dance they are placed in their shrines.

But the two old men who made them, and whose souls have passed into their frames, die within a few days.

It is obvious, therefore, that it is highly dangerous to make an Anga. In Korenda at the present time the process of god-making has been delayed, although long overdue; for there is no old Partabi or Wadde willing to take the risk. It is generally said that such men will die within a year; if they do not they are regarded as exceptionally lucky. But their life thereafter is blind and shrunken, miserable to themselves and a heavy charge on their relations. Thus in Kabonga, Malsai made a new Anga and lived for four years before he died. But it is said that for the last three years of his life, he was a senile and helpless figure, longing for the death that was denied him.[1]

Repairs to the Anga, which are made every twelve or fifteen years, are less dangerous, but they too should only be undertaken by old men.

The Anga has various functions. Its primary function, of course, is that of god of the clan, keeping its scattered members together and attracting them to its worship. It is honoured at the great clan festivals held once a year in the *pen-rawar* and it may also be taken out to visit the shrines of related clan-gods. At a big clan-festival and at the great Mandai commercial festivals at Jagdalpur, Dantewara, Kondagaon and elsewhere sometimes a dozen or more of these Anga may be present. The procedure is generally the same. The Anga is worshipped with various offerings; it is taken down to the river and immersed in water, it is then anointed with oil and carried on the shoulders of its bearers; it is 'exercised' by dancing and playing with the other gods. At these festivals I have often watched the Anga attended by a dozen lesser gods, a crowd of drummers and gong-beaters and a vast company of boys and girls, men and women, going round and round the sacred clearing in procession. This is the Pen Karsita or Sport of the Gods.

Incest within the clan is regarded as specially insulting to the Anga and before the guilty can be forgiven offerings must be made to it. If they do not do this the offenders' bodies will swell and their eyes burst. They will be buried apart from the other members of the family or clan, and their children will be given to the despised Lohar in marriage.

As god of the clan the Anga is specially interested in marriages, and in many villages the Muria place one of the marriage crowns upon it or in its shrine. Often too it is concerned in death ceremonies. The memorial menhirs of

[1] An old report, by Captain MacPherson, on the Kond refers to one of their destructive deities. 'It is firmly believed that the tree under which the deity is placed must die; that the water in which he is laid must be dried up; that the priest in his service cannot expect to survive four years.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. II (1892), p. 20. When the Kiwai Papuans erect a man's house (*darima*), an old couple perform the proper ceremonies and die soon after. 'There seems to be an understanding that the endowment of the house with its various magical properties has consumed their vitality.' —G. Landtmann, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London, 1927), p. 22.

THE MURIA AND THEIR GHOTUL

members of the clan should be erected, if possible, in its neighbourhood. At Phunder there is a bamboo bundle containing a small earthen pot hanging above the Anga of the Maravi clan. When any Maravi dies his relatives carry his *jiwa* there, open the bamboo bundle and sacrifice a chicken above it, allowing the blood to fall into the pot. This means that the soul of the dead man will henceforth live in the pot hanging above his clan-god.

Another important function of the Anga is to serve as a means of detecting witches, breach of tribal taboo, theft or even to discover loss of property. At the end of 1940 I witnessed an interesting witch-hunt at Palki in the Narayanpur Tahsil.

On 16 November 1940, Aitu, the Muria headman of Palki, bought eight annas worth of Court Fee stamps and affixed them to an application to the Tahsildar of Kondagaon, complaining that in his village the animals were dying, people were falling sick and crops were failing, and asking for the services of the Anga Deo at Bara Dongar to discover what witch, magician or malignant ghost or deity was responsible. On his paying five rupees into the Treasury the Tahsildar issued *parwāna* instructing the priest in charge of the god to take it to Palki (but to no other village) in order to discover and thus cure the trouble.

On the 18th, Aitu reached the shrine at Bara Dongar, and almost immediately the party set out. There was Deo Singh, the hereditary Halba priest of the god, four Muria bearers to carry it and a 'Dhurwa' priest, a Muria specially attached to the god's service. In two days they reached Palki and camped in a little shed of branches outside the village, placing the god on a rough bed of logs and branches in a separate hut.

There Deo Singh told me about this famous Anga. His name was Narsingnath Deo and he was born at Amgaon in the Chota Dongar Pargana. His father was Mong Raj, who now lives at Paralkot, his mother Devni Dokari of Antagarh. His younger brother is the Pat Deo who now lives at Jagdalpur and was taken there in the time of Raja Bhairon Deo to hunt witches. Here, of course, Deo Singh was talking in theological language: actually the Raja, hearing of the fame of the Anga in the wilds, had a copy made and installed in the palace at Jagdalpur. For some time the custom was to bring the original god from Jagdalpur and send the copy to take its place; but in time this custom was dropped and today the Anga in the palace acts independently of its prototype.

Raja Bhairon Deo, continued my informant, at one time had both Anga at Jagdalpur. There was a great epidemic, and none of the gods was able to help, so the Raja ordered them all to be thrown into the Indrawati river. But only Anga Deo and his young brother Pat Deo floated on the surface and drifted to the shore. This made them very famous, but the Raja felt that it was wrong to keep two such gods in Jagdalpur and he sent the Anga Narsingnath to Bara Dongar, where he has since resided.[1]

This Anga is made of bel wood. Every three generations it is remade. It is decorated with a silver snake and a sun and moon in silver. The old worn-out images are thrown into a deep pond at Amgaon.

On the 20th of November the witch hunt at Palki began. It was only with great difficulty that I was able to be present, for the villagers concealed both the time and place of the ceremony, and in fact were sending me off in the

[1] For another account see W. V. Grigson's Introduction to my *Maria Murder and Suicide* (1943), pp. x f. According to Grigson's information the Jagdalpur god was copied from the Narayanpur god.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

and in front of the shrine a pile of old clay elephants, bulls and horses. And indeed I was told that the Anga used to live up on the hillside but was offended by the rough Muria habits and moved down to the plain where he

FIG. 26. A typical carved wooden pigeon often found in Muria shrines
Length 9½"

would not be offended by the sight of his worshippers eating beef. Here, in vivid symbol, was the god leading the hillmen down into the plains, from the open free hut to the enclosed house, to a reform of diet and a change of religious custom and the use of ephemeral images made by low-caste Hindu artisans.

There are two other small temples, both open sheds, to visit; both are for the Naitami clan. The first is for Paknabundin Matal, who is represented by a big stone, and the other for Tallur Muttai, the Village Mother, also represented by a stone. These four temples of the plain are not without their charm; set among great trees they look towards the grim rocks of the hills above them. But they have not the hard clear light and freedom of the shrines that brave the rocks and mountain.

VI. THE MURIA PRIESTHOOD

Who are the priests that officiate at these temples? In a sense every Muria is a priest; for the head of each family tends the dead of his house and can make offerings to his personal gods, but there are priestly families of greater or less influence which have performed the worship of the gods for generations.

Notable among these is the priest of the clan-god or Anga, often now called the Pen-Pujari or Pen-Gaita. In the Chota Dongar and Partabpur areas, he is called the Pen-Waddai. He is also known as the Dhurwa, which is the name of a tribe in the south of the State and possibly has associations with the Dhur Gond. This use of a tribal name as a priestly title is paralleled by the use of the word Baiga to denote a village-priest. It suggests that the Dhurwa tribe like the Baiga is regarded by the people as of great antiquity.

Then there is the priest of the *bhum* or earth. The Kaser-Gaita (knife-priest), also known as the Bhum-Gaita or Mati-Gaita (earth-priest), has the duty of offering sacrifices to the earth and keeping the village free of disease. It is he who must go to the fields and clearings when they are prepared and must make offerings at sowing time and harvest.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

411 in this book, but the Maria have a fine spear used for stabbing. Bows and arrows are not unlike those in use elsewhere. The arrows are either pointed or clubbed. Pellet bows are used for killing birds, as is the *engram*, the many-pointed wooden arrow which is illustrated here. The pointed iron arrow is that employed in most of the murders by shooting or stabbing. But the *engram* was used in one or two cases.

412 Implements of domestic use include the heavy rice-husker which is so constantly in the hands of the women. With this Oyami Masa in a fit of rage battered his cousin to death at Jabeli.[1] The Bison-horn Maria hoe (*korki*) is similar to that common in the plains, and a man once used it to kill his mother in a fit of drunkenness.[2]

283 The Maria have no subsidiary industries worth the name.
286 Spinning and weaving is taboo to them, though they are
285 allowed to spin rope from hemp and grass. They make baskets of leaves and bamboo, but mostly for their own domestic use. They are expert at making mats, which they either weave with grass and reeds on a frame or plait with bamboo slats. The Maria do their own ironwork and do it
326 well, for there is a plentiful supply of excellent ore. Those
565 Maria who take to smelting and blacksmithery are regarded as inferior by the others who generally do not inter-marry or eat with them. This rule is not, however, absolute and in other ways the Maria blacksmiths live as members of the tribe, join their dances and festivals and share the common life. For statistical purposes I have included the Maria blacksmiths among the other Maria in this book.

III

771 The religion of the Maria centres round the Earth, the State and the Clan. The Earth is the ultimate source of life and is personified in the Village Mother. The State is represented by Danteshwari, the tutelary goddess of the royal family: she is now sometimes identified with the Earth Mother or the Village Mother, but she often has a shrine or at least an image of her own, and her cult is rapidly increasing in popularity.

771 Developing out of the cult of the earth is the worship of
776 the clan-god. The traditional theory is that every clan is
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[1] Case No 62. [2] Case No 72.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. 771
Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should 776
be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan- 614
priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of 615
phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other 614
tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken [177] down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series 796
of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony